Florida Keys Most Unwanted

Many folks know about invasive exotic plants like Brazilian pepper and invasive exotic animals like Burmese Pythons. More aggressive than other non-natives, they do not stay where planted and instead spread into natural areas, crowding out the native plants and dependent wildlife. Exotic pets are great escape artists and are also often dumped when their owners cannot take care of them anymore or find a home for them. The Florida Keys Invasive Exotic Task Force has a 14 year history of working together across public and private conservation lands to reduce the abundance and chokehold of our most prolific invaders.

Unfortunately, the usual suspects are not the end of the invasion. Florida is known for the diversity of plants it grows for agriculture and landscaping, and the Port of Miami imports thousands of species a year, a few of which are destined to hop the fence and become our next problem. This is why the Florida Keys Invasive Exotics Task Force is asking you to become part of the solution through the Early Detection Scavenger Hunt.

Why Early Detection?

The rules of engagement for invasive exotics are threefold: Prevention (the cheapest option), Early Detection/Rapid Response (the second cheapest option) and Control (the most expensive option).

Prevention aims to identify invaders before they have escaped. Participating GreenThumb Nurseries are a large part of the prevention strategy for the Keys because besides offering Florida Friendly gardening products, they also do not sell any Florida Keys Invasive Exotic plants.

Early Detection/Rapid Response (EDRR) is the next step if prevention hasn't worked and a small number of new invasives have taken hold. There is still a chance with a concerted effort to remove that new population before it gets too widespread to handle.

Control: A misnomer at best, control is anything but. It means management of these invasive species in perpetuity, a constant effort against a constant seed source to keep our natural areas as healthy as possible.

The Early Detection Scavenger Hunt:

The hardest part of about EDRR is finding out where the new invaders are. First invasions from the mainland populations are sparse and often overlooked. The purpose of the Early Detection Scavenger Hunt is to increase the number of eyes on the ground so that we can efficiently protect our natural areas. To that end, managers of our natural areas are offering prizes to folks that can help us correctly identify and map the new species of biggest concern.

The Prizes:

Conservation land managers in the Florida Keys Invasive Exotics Task Force are offering prizes for the most correctly identified species.

Grand Prize: For the largest number of newly mapped, correctly identified species overall, is a snorkel or glass bottom boat trip for two from either Bahia Honda State Park or Pennekamp State Park.

Regional Prizes: For the largest number of newly mapped, correctly identified species in each region, winners will get to choose between a Gift certificate to the Key Deer Bookstore, Annual pass to Crane Point Hammock, Free Full Moon Kayak Trip, or a State Park Canoe or Kayak trip.

Regions are:
1) (Key Largo to Lower Matecumbe,
2) Layton to Marathon,
3) Little Duck Key to Boca Chica,
4) Stock Island to Key West.

The Rules:

- The EDRR Scavenger Hunt begins September 1st and ends on September 30th.
- To be considered a valid entry, contestants must upload original photos of their finds via www.IveGot1.org
- To be considered a valid entry, the species reported cannot be a repeat of a previously mapped find, already present on the EDDMapS distribution maps provided.
- Winners will be announced October 12th

The Mapping Process: www.IveGot1.org

The I've Got 1 website is powered by EDDMapS (Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System). It uses Google Maps or GPS points to log your species, and allows you to upload photos from your scavenger hunt. Two different types of training can be found here: **Step by Step 4 page Guide or 13 minute "How To" video**

The Top 13 Early Detection Priority Species

Below is the Florida Keys' list of priority early detection species. Each species has many links to help you learn more about the species, especially what it looks like and where it has already been mapped. On the next page is a single page of images to help you in your scavenger hunt.

A couple of hints: Some species are really, really rare here so far. In some cases, you can use the EDDMapS distribution map to find a live specimen to get a better look at what you are looking for.

#	Distribution Map	Common Name	Species Name	Similar Species	Best Links
1.	EDDMapS, USDA	Old world climbing fern	*Lygodium microphyllum*		UF/IFAS, Invasive.org, FLEPPC
2.	EDDMapS, USDA	Air Potato	*Dioscorea bulbifera*	1) *Ipomea* spp 2) Moonvines 3) Possum grape	UF/IFAS, Invasive.org, FLEPPC
3.	EDDMapS, USDA	Burma Reed	*Neyraudia reynaudiana*		UF/IFAS, FLEPPC Plant Conservation Alliance
4.	EDDMapS, USDA	Colubrina	*Colubrina asiatica*	*Colubrina arborescens*	UF/IFAS, Invasive.org, Plant Conservation Alliance, FLEPPC, FLEPPC2
5.	EDDMapS, USDA	Coral Vine	*Antigonon leptopus*		UF/IFAS, Invasive.org, ISSG
6.	EDDMapS, USDA	Tropical Soda Apple	*Solanum viarum*	Castor Bean	UF/IFAS, Invasive.org , Bugwood
7.	EDDMapS, USDA	Simpleleaf Chastetree	*Vitex trifolia*	Brazilian pepper	Invasive.org, Plant Atlas
8.	EDDMapS, USDA	Guinea grass	*Panicum maxium*	*Panicum virgatum*	UF/IFAS, Invasive.org, ISSG
9.	EDDMapS	Pythons/Boas	*Python spp.*	Water snakes	REDDy , ID Deck, Slideshow , Florida Snake Identification
10.	EDDMapS	Black Spiny tail iguana	*Ctenosaura similis*	*Iguana iguana* (Green Iguana)	Images, FFWCC Invasive.org , WildHerps
11.	EDDMapS	Giant Ameivas	*Ameiva ameiva*		FFWCC, Images, CalPhotos, Save the Reptiles
12.	EDDMapS	Gambian Pouch Rats	*Cricetomys gambianus*	1) Brown Rat, 2) Opossum	Images, FFWCC, USDA
13.	USDA Animated Map	Lionfish	*Pterois volitans*	Scorpionfishes	Pest Alert, USDA, NPR

Species Cheat Sheet

This is just a small primer to help you in your search. If you are not very familiar with the species, be sure to consult the links provided on the previous page.

A small hint: In some cases, you can use the EDDMapS distribution map to find a live specimen to get a better look at what you are looking for.

Old world climbing fern

Air Potato	**Burma Reed**	**Colubrina**	**Coral Vine**
			
Tropical Soda Apple	**Simpleleaf Chastetree**	**Guinea grass**	**Pythons/Boas**
			
Black Spiny tail iguana	**Giant Ameivas**	**Gambian Pouch Rats**	**Lionfish**